

REMARKS

Claims 21-26 and 28-36 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,979,599 to Noles (hereinafter, 'Noles'). Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious in light of Noles in view of U.S. Patent No. 857924 to Crandall. Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections, but has nevertheless amended the claims and reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the previously recited claims in one or more continuation applications. Applicant submits that amended claims are patentable over the cited prior art for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 21 recites a traveler for use with a fall arrest system which includes at least one support supporting a safety line having a longitudinal centerline, the traveler including, inter alia:

... **said body including** a load member for attaching said traveler to fall safety equipment, and **top and bottom gates spaced apart from one another and defining said slot therebetween, wherein said bottom gate is disposed below said top gate when said body is disposed vertically about the safety line; and**

wherein said body is rotatable about the longitudinal centerline of the safety line between a first rotational orientation and a second rotational orientation, wherein in said first rotational orientation a feature of said body separate from and disposed above said bottom gate interfaces to a first part of said given support to limit further rotational movement of said body about the centerline of the safety line in a first rotational sense, and wherein in said second rotational orientation a portion of said bottom gate of said body interfaces to a second part of said given support to limit further rotational

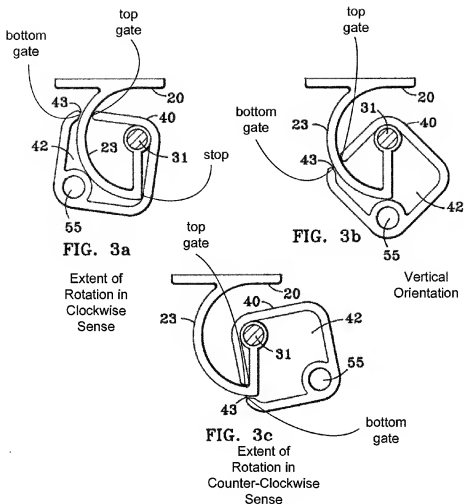
movement of said body about the centerline of the safety line in a second rotational sense opposite said first rotational sense.

Nowhere does the cited prior art teach or suggest these features.

Claim 21 requires that the bottom gate be disposed below the top gate when the body is disposed vertically about the safety line, that the body be rotatable about the centerline of the safety line to a first rotational orientation in which a feature of the body separate from and disposed above the bottom gate interfaces to a first part of the given support to limit further rotational movement of the body about the centerline of the safety line in a first rotational sense, and that the body be rotatable about the centerline of the safety line to a second rotational orientation in which a portion of the bottom gate interfaces to the given support to limit further rotational movement of the body about the centerline of the safety line in a second rotational sense opposite the first rotational sense.

The bottom and top gates of claim 21 correspond to the "gates" of Noles as shown in the markup below.

Fig. 3b shows the vertical orientation of the body 40 with the bottom "gate" disposed below the top "gate". The body 40 can rotate in a clockwise sense about the track 31 and can rotate in a counter-clockwise sense about the track 31. Fig. 3a shows the extent of rotation of the body 40 in the clockwise sense. Fig. 3c shows the extent of rotation of the body 40 in the counterclockwise sense.



Note that in the configuration of Noles shown in Fig. 3c, the top "gate" interfaces to the support 23 near the bottom elbow of the support in order to limit counterclockwise rotation of the body 40. This is analogous to the first rotational orientation of claim 21 where "a feature of said body separate from and disposed above said bottom gate interfaces to a first part of said given support to limit further rotational movement of said body about the centerline of the safety line in a first rotational sense." However, Noles does not teach or suggest any configuration analogous to the second rotational orientation of claim 21 where a portion of the bottom gate interfaces to the given support to limit

further rotational movement of the body about the centerline of the safety line in a second rotational sense opposite the first rotational sense. Instead, in the opposite clockwise sense shown in Fig. 3a of Noles, the rotation of the body 40 is stopped by the bottom of the "straight section" of the support as previously referenced by the examiner. Importantly, Noles does not employ any configuration where the bottom gate contacts the support or inhibits rotation of the body 40 as required by claim 21. Similarly, in FIG. 9 of Noles, the bottom gate never contacts the support 23 or inhibits rotation of the body 40.

The Crandall reference does not remedy the shortcomings of Noles,

Thus, the cited prior art fails to teach or suggest important limitations of claim 21. Accordingly, claim 21 is clearly patentable over the cited prior art.

Claims 23-30 respectively depend from claim 21, and are thus patentable for the same reasons that claim 21 is patentable, and for reciting additional limitations shown in the art.

For example, claim 23 requires that the bottom gate have a first convex surface, the top gate have a second convex surface, and that the first and second convex surfaces face each other and define the slot. Noles does not disclose or suggest convex surfaces which face each other and define the slot. Instead, Noles discloses surfaces at the end of the gates which match the surface contour of the support (e.g., define curves which are

relatively concentric with the curves defined by the inner and outer surfaces of the support) such that when the body is rotated, the gates do not contact the surface of the support (which would inhibit rotation). Thus, Noles teaches away from the use of convex surfaces which face each other and are disposed on gates which are spaced apart from each other as required by claim 23.

Claim 26 recites that "said given support includes a straight section and a curved section, said straight section being the first part of said given support that interfaces to the portion of said bottom gate in said second rotational position, and said curved section being the second part of said given support that interfaces to the feature of said body in said first rotational position." Noles does not disclose these limitations.

Claim 31 is patentable for the same reason that claim 21 is patentable.

Claims 33-36 respectively depend from claim 31, and are thus patentable for the same reason that claim 31 is patentable, and for reciting additional limitations not shown or suggested in the cited art.

For example, claim 33 is patentable for the same reasons that claim 23 is patentable, and claim 36 is patentable for the same reasons that claim 26 is patentable.

In light of all of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in order for allowance, and prompt allowance is earnestly requested. Should any issues remain

outstanding, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney of record so that the case may proceed expeditiously to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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